



Marriage Growth-Track

Week 12 - Day 1

Encouraging one Another

by Justin and Amber Paulk

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Hebrews 10:24-25

These verses could almost be paraphrased by saying, ‘the more the merrier’ when you think about how we get through this crazy journey called life. Keep gathering; don’t go it alone! This is what we see in these verses:

- We are at our best when we are in a community;
- God designed us to work together;
- Surround yourself with like-minded people who will support you;
- Be a part of a small group

Have you ever been completely lost? Like really, really lost with no idea where you were or how you needed to get back to where you came from? It might not be as common today as it was ten years ago before everyone had a GPS on their phone, but there was actually a time when you might head out on a trip or a hike, make a few unexpected turns, and end up literally in the middle of nowhere.

And without a clue as to how to get home.

Our spiritual walk with Christ can sometimes feel like that as well. We start out all committed and ‘on fire’ for the Lord, and before we know it, we’ve taken more than a few wayward turns or made a few questionable decisions, and next thing we know, we’re lost. *Really lost.*

What should we do?
How should we go about doing it?
Who will help us?

Take comfort—there’s good news all around. First, everyone struggles at some point (or several) along the way on our walk with Christ; and second, the solution is a pretty easy fix—community.

God recognized right from the beginning (as in the very beginning) that having a community surrounding humans would be key to our growth as individuals, within marriage, and for the future of the church as well. We simply weren't created to live this life alone. We all need interaction with others to become fully alive.

Small groups/life groups are one of the most effective ways for couples to strengthen their marriages and their faith in God and have a whole lot of fun in the meantime. For many, their deepest conversations, wisest decisions, and greatest breakthroughs in relationships have come about as a result of being involved in a life group of couples at similar life stages. It is a true reflection of the early church whereby like-minded believers gathered together in one another's homes for fellowship and to strengthen one another's faith.

If you look back to the beginning of Jesus' ministry, He created His first church with just himself and His 12 disciples—believers who wanted to grow their faith yet needed the support and encouragement of others. Just like our life groups today. Our campus life groups are a perfect illustration of Pastor Andy Stanley's comment, "Life change happens in circles, *not rows*."

Discussion Questions:

1. Would you say you are significantly involved in your church and that you are "connected" to a small group.
2. Do you agree that such fellowship is important to every Christian's life?

Action Steps:

If you are not currently involved in a small group, spend some time this week finding one. Get with your campus pastor, or connections pastor to see what small groups are available to join.

Prayer:

God, we are so grateful for the importance you place on community. We understand that, while we walk with you as individuals, you designed us to have a community minded support structure to help us reach our potential. We all have spiritual gifts as individuals, but combining all those gifts in a community is really what makes up the success of the church. Lord, we ask that you open our minds and our hearts to growing together as a group.